Patent claims

1.-7. (cancelled)

8. (new) A method for monitoring a pipeline for slow reduction of an internal cross section of the pipeline by using a position of a control valve in the pipeline, wherein an substantially constant flow of a medium through the control valve exists, the method comprising:

determining and storing a first position of the control valve at a first point in time;

determining a second position of the control valve later point in time at a second point in time later than the first point in time;

determining a time at which the position of the valve exceeds a specifiable threshold value for a valve opening; and

outputting a signal to indicate the threshold is exceeded and/or to indicate the time the threshold was exceeded.

9. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein the threshold value is predetermined depending on the first position of the control valve.

10. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein the threshold value is at 80% opening relative to the range of settings between complete valve opening and the first position of the control valve.

11. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein the setting signal is smoothed by a low-pass filter before the valve position is determined.

12. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the setting signal is smoothed by a low-pass filter before the

valve position is determined.

13. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 10, wherein the setting signal is smoothed by a low-pass filter before the valve position is determined.

14. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the setting signal is smoothed by the low-pass filter by forming a moving average value, before the valve position is determined.

15. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein the change over time in the position of the control valve is determined and the point is estimated at which the position of the control valve is likely to exceed the specifiable threshold values is estimated.

16. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the change over time in the position of the control valve is determined and the point is estimated at which the position of the control valve is likely to exceed the specifiable threshold values is estimated.

17. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 10, wherein the change over time in the position of the control valve is determined and the point is estimated at which the position of the control valve is likely to exceed the specifiable threshold values is estimated.

18. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the change over time in the position of the control valve is determined and the point is estimated at which the position of the control valve is likely to exceed the specifiable threshold values is estimated.

19. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 14, wherein the change over time in the position of the control valve is determined and the point is estimated at which the position of the control valve is likely to exceed the specifiable threshold values is estimated.

20. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein the pressure of the medium in the pipeline is determined and that, if a permitted deviation from an average pressure value is exceeded the monitoring of the pipeline for reduction of the internal cross section is interrupted.

21. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the pressure of the medium in the pipeline is determined and that, if a permitted deviation from an average pressure value is exceeded the monitoring of the pipeline for reduction of the internal cross section is interrupted.

22. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 10, wherein the pressure of the medium in the pipeline is determined and that, if a permitted deviation from an average pressure value is exceeded the monitoring of the pipeline for reduction of the internal cross section is interrupted.

23. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the pressure of the medium in the pipeline is determined and that, if a permitted deviation from an average pressure value is exceeded the monitoring of the pipeline for reduction of the internal cross section is interrupted.

24. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein to suppress the influence of pressure variations on the position of the valve, a pressure compensation is executed on the basis of a predefined dependency of the valve position on a pressure

of the medium.

25. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein to suppress the influence of pressure variations on the position of the valve, a pressure compensation is executed on the basis of a predefined dependency of the valve position on a pressure of the medium.

26. (new) The method in accordance with Claim 10, wherein to suppress the influence of pressure variations on the position of the valve, a pressure compensation is executed on the basis of a predefined dependency of the valve position on a pressure of the medium.

27. (new) A position regulator for a control valve, comprising:

a position indicator for acquiring a position of the control valve; and

an evaluation device for evaluating the acquired position, wherein the evaluation device is embodied such that when the control valve is used in a control loop to regulate to a constant flow of a medium through a pipeline to monitor the pipeline for slow reduction of a free internal cross section with the aid of a position of the control valve, at a first point in time a first position of the control valve is determined and stored, and wherein at a second, later point in time at least a second position of the control valve is determined, and wherein the time at which the position of the valve exceeds a definable threshold value for valve opening is determined, and wherein a signal to indicate that the threshold has been exceeded and/or the time at which it was exceeded is output.